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Everybody against the JS II

A new season has begun in Buenos Aires, and a few uncertaintities and questions have been answered. First pole position Laffite. First victory, Lafitte. First fastest lap Lafitte. The Argentinians, among the most enthusiastic and chauvinist spectators in the world, had come to see their idol Carlos "Lole" Reutemann win. They went home with the blue Ligiers of France uppermost in their minds. The Lotus 79 has given way to another queen.

On leaving France the Vichyssois camp was both confident and apprehensive. The new JS II had not yet really shown its potential. In Buenos Aires it has shown remarkable qualities which can be summed up in two words: speed and reliability. From now on the "Ligier Boys" can face the future with assurance, but they should not rest on their laurels. The "Loti" have not abdicated. The Ferraris were not at their best. The McLaren 28 which is already promising, will progress a lot more. The Tyrrells showed themselves to be very competitive but were unluckily struck by trouble. The newest cars, the Brabham BT 48 and the Wolf WR 7 paid the price for their lack of testing. From the Brazilian Grand Prix onwards they will all gang up against the blue arrows. Whatever happens the Vichy "wing-car" has just proved it is a "win-car". The Argentinian Grand was the race which signalled the French revival.

GRAND PRIX INTERNATIONAL IS DISTRIBUTED BY SEYMOUR PRESS LTD: 334 Briston Road, London/SW9 AG. Tel: 01-733 4444 telex: 88 12 954. Seymour Press London. CHIEF EDITOR: Eric Bhat. ASSISTANT EDITORS: David Walbron. EDITORIAL SECRETARY: Xavier de Nombel. ART DIRECTOR: Marc Blais. PHOTOGRAPHERS: Bernard Asset, Harald Strebelle, Camera Canon. GRAND PRIX INTERNATIONAL is published by SNEP. ILLUSTRATION: Marc Monceau. PUBLISHING DIRECTOR: Michel Hommel. ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Gérard Lips. EDITORIAL/ADMINISTRATION: 7, rue de Lille, 75007 Paris, France, 260.34.65. ADVERTISING PROFIL 18/30: 7, rue de Lille, 75007 Paris, 260.34.65. COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR: Philippe Mechin. PHOTO SETTING: Typo-Elysees, Compotronic. DISTRIBUTED IN GERMANY by W.E. Saarbach GmbH. 5. Köln. 1. Postfach 10 16 10 Follerstrasse 2. Tel. 0221/24 46 31. Telex 8881067. DISTRIBUTED IN ITALY by Seymour Press Ltd. 334 Briston Road London Swg AG. Tel. 01-733.4444. DISTRIBUTED IN GREAT BRITAIN by ME.PE Via Carcano 32. 20141 Milano ; tel. 02/84 38 141. DISTRIBUTED IN FRANCE by NMPP. PHOTOGRAVURE R.P.M. PRINTED in England by Group Print London. CPPAP in waiting.

On sale 10 days after each Grand Prix

The french revival

A completely French front row (drivers and cars). Three other Frenchmen among the first ten on the starting grid. A French victory. A French lap record. A French double missed by a whisker: what madness got into "L'équipe de France" in Formula 1 on 21st January in Buenos Aires ?

In the DC10 which was carrying his warriors to Argentina, a few kilometres above the Atlantic Ocean, Gérard Ducarouge was brushing up his Spanish. The Ligier team manager could not concentrate on his grammar. Too many ideas were swirling around in his head. Every minute or so he went back to his Spanish again, and every other minute his attention was distracted by a question or by a doubt, or again a hope. Everything revolved around the same theme: what did the Argentinian Grand Prix hold in score for the new Ligier JS 11's. And without even the concrete results which the first practice sessions would bring to light. It was getting late, and Gérard finally dropped off to sleep.

One row behind him, Patrick Depailler puffed away distractedly at a cigarette, exchanging a non-committal word with a mechanic or a journalist. His mind wandered back and forth between Paul Ricard and Buenos Aires, quicker than the plane almost quicker than light itself; he was going from an immediate past to an immediate future. Buenos Aires, what was going to happen? On the one hand a reassuring certainty, and on the other, hope mixed with impatience and doubt. The initial tests of the JS II had given fantastic results. But...

Neither Gérard, nor Patrick, nor Jacques Laffite who was already basking in Argentinian sunlight could answer all the questions which arose in their minds. The first practice sessions of the JS 11 were certainly encouraging. Even more than that perhaps, as Patrick and Jacques had both got round Paul Ricard quicker than anybody else. The birth of the JS II appeared to be pretty successful at first sight ...like the JS 5 at the end of 75 on the same circuit, and like the JS 9 at Jarama in March 78; and this was just what was worrying Ducarouge as neither of these cars were crowned with success. Worse even, the JS 9 was found to have an incurable aerodynamic defect. So then, was history going to repeat itself confirming the theory of certain historians who swear only by the phenomen of eternal beginnings?

Thursday, two o'clock

The shrill whistle of the starter, caused by the release of compressed air. The first engine bursts into song 500 horsepower chaffing with impatience at the portals of the 79 season, soon accompanied by 500 more, a thousand more, ten thousand more. It is the beginning of the first untimed practice session. No more questions now, it is lapping, lapping again and solving as quickly as possibly the problems which always crop up. The count-down has begun and it will not finish until the chequered flag falls on Sunday afternoon. From here on the hive will be humming day and night, with the mechanics flitting backwards and forwards between the pits and the paddock.

Glistening under a merciless sun, the single seaters begin their first laps, some rapidly others at a slower pace, the new as well as the old. The traditional ones and the ground effect cars which moreover still ressemble each other.

First of all the shark-nosed JS 11s remain silent in front of their pits. They are completely new. Lionel Hublet, the chief mechanic, and his men carry out last minute checks, a screw wrench in one hand, a duster in the other almost mechanically polishing the bodywork. It appears to the almost a caress, but voluptuous sensations do not exist in motor sport. Time keeps marching on.

On purpose, Jacques and Patrick new team-mates take to the track together for the first time. For one it is a continuation. For the other it is an important turning point, almost a fresh start after 5 years of good and faithful service with Ken Tyrrell.

And soon the news spreads through the pits like wildfire. The Ligiers are going well, very well. They are the first to break the 1' 47" barrier, whereas others such as the Renaults or the Williams are making desperate efforts to break into the 1' 50" 5. The other new cars, the Brabham BT 48 and the Wolf WR7 do not even manage to cover more than three successive laps of the track.

The Ligiers have managed to escape these teething troubles by some magic charm. In fact here the word charm stands for hard and well organized work. It was a hard winter in the Vichy workshops. The only holidays were Christmas and New Year's Day. The birth of the JS 11s took up all the others. The fruit of this labour seems to be already ripening. Hyper-concentrated the men in blue do not even stop to congratulate each other, perhaps later. Time to celebrate a victory when it has been achieved.

At the end of the session Patrick Depailler breaks through a new barrier, getting round in 1' 45" 98. Second fastest Laffite. Symbolically the two Ligiers are ahead of the two Lotus 79s. Fifth fastest, Jarier. Seventh fastest, Tambay. Ninth fastest Pironi. Apart from the Renault drivers, the French can already hang out the flag. Joan of Arc and... Cambronne are avenged.

Friday eleven o'clock

Now the timed sessions are about to begin. The air is electric, this time the official watches are set to go. The times whether good or bad will be

entered on the sheet and sent throughout the world by the magic of the telex. This time the cards are down, no more cheating even supposing that this has been the case.

Patrick Depailler has already stopped and there is still half-an-hour to go. His team-mate Laffite is still out there in the arena. Thinking about it why should Patrick go out again. He has Goodyear racing tyres, his car is perfectly balanced and he has set the fastest lap in 1'45" 24. One tiny, tiny regret. *"I didn't fully understand a pit signal. I thought they wanted me to come in, and I was going to put in my best lap; nobody in front of me and the tyres still great."* Taking large puffs from a cigarette (his reward when getting out of the car) the man from Clermont-Ferrand takes stock of his first impressions. *"I believed in it. That's why I signed and I was right. 90% of my friends disapproved of my transfer from Tyrrell to Ligier. They're going to have to have a re-think."* He points out one of our colleagues from French T.V. sitting beside him on the edge of the pit counter: *"This guy thought I was right and I listened to him. He knows motor racing. I have great respect for his opinions."* He laughs softly his urchin smile breaking out and stubbs out his cigarette his eyes far away.

In the neighbouring pit, Tyrrell's hopes are already beginning to find reassurance. Moreover what might Patrick have felt were he with his former employer for whom he would still be the first hub of attack. In fact Jean-Pierre Jarier who has replaced him in the English team is beginning to go very quickly, fulfilling his whishes as much as his duties. First of all he really wants to go, the savage determination of "Godasso" when he is in a competitive car is no longer a secret to anybody. It was true when he was driving a Shadow back in 75; and Jean-Pierre reminded everybody about it last year in the U.S.A. and Canada in a Lotus 79. Perhaps (and perhaps only) he does not feel completely at home in the 009, for this one reason.

He not only wants to get on with it, he has to, only a brilliant performance of the new Tyrrells will allow Ken to find sponsors. For the moment the English cars are back in their former dark blue paintwork. They carry only Goodyear stickers and Tyrrell written in huge letters on the flanks profiled as inverted wings.

Thus a tremendous motivation drives the Frenchman, and it is the first thing necessary to go quickly. There is a second one which is no less important namely, to drive a car with the qualities and the potential necessary to match this motivation. The Tyrrell 009 seems to have them. Jean-Pierre quickly breaks the 1'47" barrier, then the 1'46", getting his times down like clockwork. When Norah Tyrrell's watch shows 1'45'4, Ken's look brightens momentarily; the horizon clears. Second fastest time for the 009. A successful baptism for it too. Lucky French drivers...

In spite of himself Didier Pironi watches these struggles as a spectator. Looking at his team-mates times, he burns with impatience at not being in the cockpit of his 009. He cannot fight against the stopwatches as his beautiful single-seater cannot race. Didier explains: *"In the straight I must have run over some debris from the Wolf which had lost some of its bodywork." My left rear wheel literally exploded. I heard a big bang and I saw behind me the three fatal numbers: 008. I couldn't leave the track otherwise I would have the reserve. Not much for me. So I stayed on the track but the hub carrier and the suspension were damaged. The annoying thing is that we have no spares."*

—"Ask Lotus for some?"

—*"No they're not exactly the same,"* he replies with a smile. Then he frowns: *"Perhaps I won't be able to practice this afternoon. It's a damned nuisance. My car is practically new, and it needs a lot of setting up."*

In the opposite camp, Ligier, Depailler's team-mate is not without problems. But he accepts them philosophically while acknowledging the superb condition of the other Ligier. He has the same car. He awaits his moment of glory while trying to solve his problems. In this case the skirts are interfering with the behaviour of his own JS 11. The springs which hold them in position against the track are breaking, the air-tightness is no longer assured under the side pods, reducing the famous ground effect around which the car has been constructed. Thus the JS 11 is losing its efficiency.

Jacques however remains confident and amazingly calm. *"It's true that I often act the fool,"* he admits freely. *"But in general it's a self-defensive reflex against the various problems which I don't manage to really define. I try to cover them up, to amuse those around me, and also to re-assure myself."*

Today however Jacques is not playing the clown. He is really concentrating on the setting up of his car. Perhaps he still remembers what Guy Ligier said on the day of the official presentation of the JS 11:

"Patrick coming into our team will be a good thing for Jacques, whatever he says. It will stimulate him and make him concentrate more. If he really puts his mind to it, he can become World champion. And with all my heart I hope he will do so at the wheel of a Ligier."

But no, Jacques is certainly not thinking about those words. Why should he? Intelligence is knowing how to adapt. Jacques is intelligent. He knows that Buenos Aires is going to be very important for him; since yesterday he knows that after three years of patient waiting, he has finally got a competitive car. He must grasp this chance, and his behaviour shows that he is fully aware of this.

At the end of the session he is fifth fastest. Only Scheckter and Reutemann separate him from his compatriots, with whom he wishes to settle his scores, sportively speaking of course, a bit later. The stopwatch will referee the duel between the "Ligier Boys" and their "English" cousins the "Tyrrell Boys".

Friday ten to two

The French festival goes on. For the last twenty minutes Jean-Pierre Jarier had held the fastest time of the second session. He is 4/100ths quicker than in the morning, in other words he has equalled his first time but it is not enough for him to beat Depailler. This however is a worthy performance as in suffocating heat the track is not as good as in the morning. At least most of the drivers think so, they find it too slippery. Jean-Pierre however is happy.

"It's going O.K. I think however that we'll have to do better tomorrow" is his only comment. As expected his teammate Pironi has not appeared on the track. Cursing his luck he seethes inwardly watching the others practising.

The session is coming to an end. The bitumen is overheated. Everyone wants to find a shady corner as quickly as possible. But it is rumoured that the French will surprise everybody right up to the end. In the very last lap Jacques Laffite gets around in 1'45"50 which allows him to overtake Reutemann and Scheckter in the provisional hierarchy. Gilles Villeneuve who has done everything possible at the wheel of his Ferrari T-3 to improve his performance, cannot get over it: *"Almost nobody improved. It was far too slippery. And then Laffite goes and gains 2/10 more in the last lap. What's more, when the temperature was at its highest. It seems the track has changed for everybody except Ligier."*

In the Vichyssois camp, the roles have inverted in relation to the previous session. Patrick cannot do any better. He has quite simply met the same problem as Laffite in the morning. *"It's stupid,"* he says regretfully. *"I realized it too late. At the end my car was oversteering a lot. The skirts were completely free."* Patrick appears tired and drawn. *"I'm not yet in the best of condition,"* he admits. *"I've been very tired this winter. Formula 1 is very tiring from a physical point of view. Adherence has progressed so much that we are beginning to be shaken about in the corners.* Villeneuve adds additional proof: *"For the first time I had a pain in my heart in the corners, and I don't think its because of a lack of training. It's because the cars grip better and better."*

Depailler, Jarier, Laffite; that is the order after the first days practice. Their domination has been complete throughout the two sessions. A number of well established yardsticks have been upset. Is the opening of the season going to be marked by a French victory? Or Franco-English? The third session could well have some surprises up its sleeve, or on the contrary bring confirmation.

All is not rosy however in the French camp. Good and bad always go together and unfortunately for Gérard Larrousse the Renaults play the minor role. Jabouille grimaces. *"On my first car,"* he complains, *"the engine didn't work properly. On the second, the starter wouldn't work. It's hopeless."* And what can he said about René Arnoux whose baptism in black and yellow cars has been a very difficult one. René walked sadly about, without a smile between the two sessions, not knowing where to look.

During this time his mechanics were attempting the impossible in trying to change his engine quickly, as it obstinately refused to breathe properly in the morning. When René finally got onto the track in the afternoon his engine gave up on him almost immediately.

And then on Friday there was an average Frenchman at Buenos Aires. Paradoxically it was the most English member of "L'équipe de France", as he has established himself in London; Patrick Tambay. Without setting the track alight the McLaren driver got his car up to the eleventh place, progressively improving his car's balance as it was rather unstable in the tight corners. This handicapped him in particular in the circuits two hairpins.

Saturday: 2.20 pm.

Jacques Laffite is in the same frame of mind as Jean-Pierre Jarier was five minutes earlier. More determined perhaps. During the morning's untimed practice session, he carried out «a few tweaks» to use his own words, and he has found the ideal balance for his Ligier.

He too knows that the track is continuing to heat up. After covering a few laps to dial himself in and check that everything is as it should be, he stops at the pits. Ducarouge comes over to him. *"Now? OK"*. Jacques nods his head. He knows what Gérard is talking about; the qualifying tyres. Hands crossed, he concentrates, insensible to the turmoil going on around him in his own pit and the neighbouring ones. The famous tyres were already prepared with large markings written in yellow chalk. The air guns whirr. The mechanics perform their well rehearsed ballet. The jacks are removed and the Ligier rejoins the ground in two movements. The gearbox clicks as Jacques slots into first. He is off after the pole position still held provisionally by Patrick Depailler.

Perched on a couple of Goodyear tyres, a large cap protecting her from the sun and as concentrated at the track side as the drivers in their cockpits, Michèle Dubosc times all the cars, the Ligiers as well as the other, to find out where her team's drivers are in relation to their competitors. A true professional in this field, Michèle was with the Matra team for a long time before going to Hesketh, after which she joined the Vichyssois camp.

Jacques' JS11 flashes by on his flying lap. A second time. Michèle carefully notes down the time on her large white sheet. *"Hmm. He's really moving, getting round in 1'45"6."* Other cars pass by almost shaving the guardrail. Michèle gets on with the job. Like air traffic controllers she cannot relax for a second in a world where tenths of a second are the common currency.

Jacques crosses the line a third time. Mechanically she presses the button. *"Good heavens, it's not possible"*, she exclaims as she calculates. She does it again. Her pencil races up and down. Standing up she shouts at Ducarouge *"Jacquot has just done a 1'44"24. I'm really delighted."* The team manager smiles. A second Ligier has just got itself up onto the front row.

When Jacques comes back to his pit, Gérard races over to him as quickly as his clogs allow. Beaming with joy he doesn't even wait until the engine is stopped before giving his driver a friendly tap on his helmet. *"You've got pole, mate!"* Jacques takes off his helmet smiling. He is given the exact time. His expression shows slight surprise. *"You suddenly found fifth, did you?"* jokes Ducarouge before congratulating his protégé warmly. Than he shoots a comment to those around.

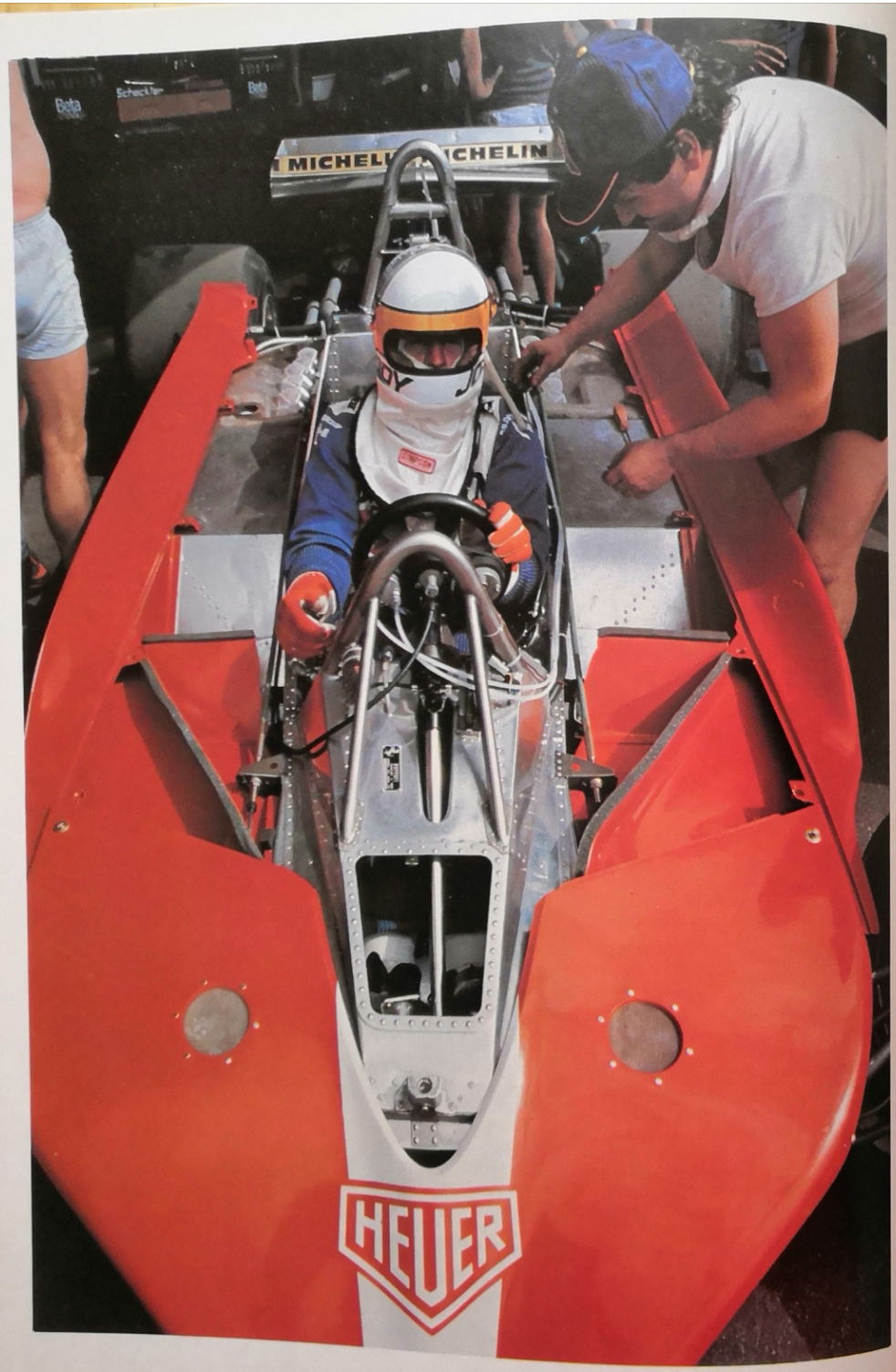
"Now you know how quickly this guy Laffite can go."

Then Jacques tells what happened to satisfy everbody. A fairly simple story in fact. *"My first lap was pretty easy in 1'45"6 and then I had a perfect second lap. Nobody messed me about in the slow corners, and no problems in the fast ones. As well as this I went flat out through the bend before the straight. I braked late everywhere but not too late. Not even the slightest mistake. Really, a perfect lap."* When you listened to it, it all seemed pretty easy.

Saturday: 2.25 pm.

As Laffite comes in, Depailler goes out in his car also fitted with qualifying tyres. Patrick bet a Brazilian journalist 200 dollars that he would take pole position but that was a few weeks ago. Now he really has his back to the wall.

The "wee" man from Clermont-Ferrand has just learned his team mate's time. Perhaps he is even thinking of the 200 dollars he has lost. Nonsense. He has but one idea, to win



back his pole position. He has the same car as Jacques. He has qualifying tyres. All the right conditions are available for him to set the track alight in his turn. All the same Jacques is now a good second ahead of him. He has got to close that gap... or indeed, reverse things in his favour.
He is not destined to reduce it. Stopwatches are not waiting for him as he completes his tyre warming lap, but the chequered flag. The organisers have decided to interrupt the session following Jarier's accident. With almost a quarter of an hour's delay! Patrick comes back to his pit without having exploited his set of "qualities".

After his accident Jean-Pierre Jarier has come back to the pits as quickly as possible. He wants to stop Pironi so that the same will not happen to him, and above all else, he wants to get into 008 to qualify it in case 009 has suffered serious damage. It us a waste of time, he can't do it, the car has a fuel leak.

Saturday: 2.45 pm.

Practice has started again. Laffite standing on the pit counter is chatting with a French journalist. He has not gone out again. "*It's not necessary*", he feels, "*The car is well set up and I can't improve my time. What's the use of tiring the car.*"
The temperature is at its highest. Nobody is improving. And it is not for want of trying. The Ferraris are doing all they can but Jody Scheckter's engine quickly breack. Suddenly the crowd takes notice. The loud-speakers announce good news about Reutemann, who is giving all he's got with qualifying tyres. Each lap the crowd's roar gets louder and louder. Suddenly

FIRST LAP:

hits and misses

When the Argentinian national flag dropped for the first time on Sunday afternoon in Buenos Aires, it started a race which was only destined to last a couple of hundrer meters. In fact a spectacular pile-up took place in the first esses after the pit straight. The altert was immediately given by a huge cloud of dust as well as by spectators and photographers at the scene of the accident.
When the two Ligiers came by in the lead at the end of the first lap, the red flag stopping the race was shown to them. Behind them came Jarier, Reutemann, Villeneuve, Fittipaldi, Regazzoni, Jabouille, de Angelis, Daly, Hunt, Mass and Rebaque. What had happened?
Let's start from the beginning. Laffite made the best start with Depailler and Jarier in his wake, who in their turn had Watson and Scheckter snapping at their heels. In the first part of the esses, a right hander, it appears that the Ferrari suddenly lost a wheel. The Italian car ran into Watsons's McLaren but the two cars continued at speed. That was the first part of the accident.
Certain drivers such as Pironi and Jones thought that there were two accidents, one in the right-hander, the other in the left. "*In the first right hander*" said Didier "*I had to slow down exactly as Fittipaldi had done.*" (Initial slow-up because of the Scheckter-Watson collision.) "*And further on the second accident took place. I couldn't avoid Scheckter.*"
In fact there was only a single pile-up as Watson and above all Scheckter continued to wreak havoc. While Reutemann and Villeneuve managed to scrape by (on the grass) by some miracle, Andretti hit Schekter. Tambay then went over the top of the Lotus and came to a stop on the verge. Panic in the pack, with eveyrone trying to find a way through with luck or without, on the grass or going blindly into the dust cloud.
When Arnoux arrived Scheckter was still spinning and hit the Renault damaging its rear suspension. Merzario hit a stationary car hard and was himself T-boned by Piquet. Lauda stopped to help his team-mate who was still in the cockpit with an injured leg. When 'help' arrived Niki became furious when he saw the doctors maltreate the Brazilian's leg, grasping it with their hands while it could still be broken. This really got the angry Austrian going.
Finally after strong rumours of a breakage had gone round, it was confirmed that Nelson was only suffering from a bruised leg and sprained toe. Normally speaking he should thus be present for his national Grand Prix at Interlagos.
The cars of Scheckter, Andretti, Tambay, Pironi, Merzario and Piquet stayed where they were.
Watson, Arnoux, Lammers and Lauda went slowly back to their pits. They were able to take part in the restart, as was Andretti who got into his reserve car. Scheckter was not allowed to drive his car by the medical authorities. He was in fact suffering from a slightly damaged wrist.

worried, Laffite leaves his observation post ans runs across the pit lane, and has a quick look at Michèle Dubosc's times. She reassures him. *"He's getting round in 1'45"40. He's still way off your times."* In any case, Carlos stops, his tyres in shreds. Laffite returns to the shade with a relieved look on his face.

Nobody will beat him. The chequered flag and pole position is his. Depallier will start alongside him on the front row. Only "Lole" has managed to squeeze in between the Frenchmen. He is in fact in front of Jarier who is worried about his car as it has a damaged tub.

Didier Pironi is eighth fastet. His mechanics have done a good job in repairing his rear suspension. But Didier is not happy. *"This afternoon I got down to 1'46"3 in four laps. My car was better set up than during untimed practice this morning, it still had vicious oversteer. In the last session it was going better. I could have got below 1'45" if I'd used qualification tyres at the same time as Jacques. But I was stuck in the pits. The mechanics were strengthening my wing supports."* The unlucky Jarier was certainly thinking the same thing. He too saw himself on the front row. Roll on Interlagos.

Patrick Tambay is right behind Pironi in the hierachy. During the interruption of the third session, he was asking himself a lot of questions. *"I'm progressively getting my times down, I'm under 1'47" but Laffite has improved even more. My car is going really well, and I can't really complain about anything. But I can't manage to go as quickly as the others. All the same, I'm going to have a go during the remaining half-hour."*

Patrick was not to *"have a go"* for very long. At a given moment in the pits everybody's attention was drawn by a dense cloud of smoke. Tambay returned to his pit with a car which was just catching fire. Luckily the fire was quickly put out.

Sunday: 2.0 pm.

In half an hour, the start. Majorettes, bands etc keep the 100,000 spectators occupied. In front of the Ligier pit Tony Southgate, the Arrows designer,

wears a look of amazement. Laffite's car is not yet ready. The mechanics are still worked at top speed to fix cooling scoops for the front brakes. Not exactly panic yet, but not far away from it.

At last the two JS11s are ready to join starting grid where the places of honour are reserved for them. Passing glory? What does it matter... *"Even if the cars break during the race"*, said Ducarouge the evening before, *"we wille at least have proved something.*

Sunday: 2.30 pm.

Ten seconds to go. The 24 rev counter needles suddenly go mad in an infernal concert of sound. The flag goes down. The Ligiers make a great start dragging Jarier's Tyrrell in their wake.

False start? Or rather a start followed by a collision. The race is stopped. Half an hour is needed to clear the track. Seated opposite each other under canvas, the upper half of their bodies naked, shoes off, the Ligier drivers wait patiently in the shade, keeping their nervous energy for what is to come. "I got away to a good start. I'll have to do it again. Law of averages..." By trying to joke, Jacques is, above all else, trying to reassure himself.

Sunday: 3.15 pm.

No, Jacques Laffite does not get away to another good start. On the first lap he is fourth behind Depailler, Jarier and Watson. As the leader gets away, five laps are enough for Jacques to climb up to second place. He catches up on his team mate and passes him on the eleventh lap. He then streaks away and nobody can stop him from carrying off his second Grand Prix.

Although being left behind, Depailler hangs on to second place, keeping 4" ahead of Reutemann. His car, however, is suffering from chronic oversteer. Incapable of following Jacques' rythm Patrick becomes angry initially, lighting up his tyres under breaking. Then he resigns himself to defending his place as best he can.

Halfway through the race, the Argentinian driver threatens him momentarily but the pressure soon vanishes. Depailler stops hurriedly at the pits. His engine has been spluttering for several laps now. The mechanics shower the fuel system with cold water and Patrick sets off again having lost two places. Two laps later his engine is on fulle song again and at the finish he comes in in fourth place.

Sunday: 5.0 pm.

Laffite has won. Of the French musketeers he has been the best, or at least has know how to make the most out of the situation right up to the end. Pironi and Tambay did not restart after the collision. Jarier retired with a broken engine, But at best he could only hope for fifth or sixth place, depending on whether he would have been capable of passing Andretti or not. The Renaults afflicted by the heat both had engine failures. Of the seven, only one remained. He was the victor.

While Jacques was completing his last lap, his mechanics wrote "Thank-you Jacquot" on his signalling board. After the chequered flag it was the first thing the winner saw. He laughed happily behind is helmet, and for the first time felt a sudden surge of emotion.

Wolf, Hunt: testing time

The Argentine Grand Prix certainly was not the most successful of races for Britain's James Hunt. His Olympus Wolf WR7 was running towards the tail end of the field when it retired with a bout of misfiring. At the time of his retirement. James had been lapped by winner Jacques Laffite's Ligier-Cosworth JS11 and the former champion clearly wasn't enjoying the most rewarding of rides. He took an unscheduled trip up an escape road, bounded across the grass to rejoin and then subsequently retired.

For James Simon Wallis Hunt, 1979 is a crucial year. James himself assert that he will be quitting once he's seen out his commitment with the Olympus Wolf team. Jackie Stewart, for one, isn't convinced. *"I just wonder whether he might change his mind"* says the little Scot, *"Around October time, perhaps, when he's won a few races..."* Stewart's former team manager Ken Tyrrell reckons that Jame's attitude in 1978 probably indicated that his will to win had vanished. *"When he made up his mind to retire, he retired"* explains Ken, *"for sure"*.

The one man who doesn't agree with that is James. He's adamant that he can apply the sort of sparkling effort that he produced in 76/77 -even with the spectre of retirement in the back of his mind. His team are certain he can win and his sponsors, Olympus Cameras, switched from Team Lotus to invest their faith in the 31-year-old British driver.

Disregarding the theories that say Hunt and Wolf were thrown together by force of circumstance: that Wolf had nobody to go for but Hunt and James had nowhere to go but Wolf, the Argentine Grand Prix proved that the Wolf team were prepared to make a big investment to ensure success in 1979. Their car, conforming to the familiar basic ground effect concept pioneered bu Lotus, is different from construction point of view and, hopefully, the best racing car produced from the drawing board of Harvey Postlethwaite.

The Wolf is of modular construction, encompassing four separate modules: the driver module, the engine module, the aerodynamic module and the transmission module. Postlethwaite has got to grips with a very complicated honeycomb bonding process which enables them to complete a monocoque out of a single sheet. The Wolf's tub starts out as a single sheet of honeycomb -rather like the cut-out cars one used to see on the back of cornflakes packets- and is folded into shape. It's a complicated process and so far four sets of parts and two complete monocoques have been built. It's designed to offer enormous strength and rigidity with a lightness and ease of maintenance. In deference to James's preference for emerging from a damaged car *"under his own steam"*, the cockpit sides are light enough to be elbowed away in the same style as those on the McLaren M26 -the car James vacated to drive the new Wolf.

The aerodynamic side pods on the Wolf WR7 are easily removable -which is just as well because Postlethwaite was jetting his way back to Britain before the start of the Argentine Grand Prix in order to prepare some re-profiled side pods in time for the Brazilian Grand Prix at Interlagos on February 4th. In Argentina James was quite adamant that the WR7's handling wasn't quite up to par. The car hadn't had sufficient testing (before going to Buenos Aires it had done some laps at Donington Park where it had been shown to the press) and suffered from acute oversteer throughout the weekend. During practice it holed a radiator, lost its nose section at about 170 mph and just missed James's head and, finally, blew an engine. James wasn't in the top dozen on the grid- and he didn't finish.

To complicate matters, the Wolf was also involved in a brief skirmish over regulations. It was discovered that vanes had been fitted on the outside of the clutch mechanism to provide a fan effect in order to pass air through the oil radiators and out through the rear brakes. Rival designers considered this to have a potential effect on the car's aerodynamics in contravention of the regulation which says that any device that effects the aerodynamic behaviour of a car must remain motionless while the car is moving. This subtle change to previous regulations was finalised only weeks before the WR7 was completed. An impromtu inquiry was carried out by FOCA and minor modifications were subsequently made to the ducting round the oil coolers. Everybody, it seemed, was happy from that point onwards.

Apart from this slight problem over the interpretation of regulations, the Wolf otherwise performed with a remarkable demonstration of reliability from must of its systems. Its general layout conforms with current F1 thinking inasmuch as it has inboard suspension tucked in tight at both front and rear and water radiators are situated within the aerodynamic side pods. The rear wing is secured by long side plates which extend out from the back end of the side pods.

The Brazilian Grand Prix should see an improvement in Wolf fortunes. What they really need is an intensive spell of development testing, after which we will be able to see whether James Hunt has lost his touch or is really able to complete with dignity amongst the world's top-liners once again.

Amongst the other British teams, the Marlboro McLaren outfit also brought brand new cars to Argentina, although the new Gordon Coppuck designed M28S could hardly be described as untested. The first M28 was ready shortly after last year's Canadian Grand Prix and has undergone a host of development changes singe that time. There were troubles with bonding certain magnesium castings to the monocoque, but that technique was mastered and the car proved highly competitive during Goodyear tyre tests at Buenos Aires in December, lapping easily quickest out of the teams that attended. A brand new car was built for Watson to actually race in Buenos Aires while the original chassis was passed over to his team mate Patrick Tambay. Although John qualified sixth on the grid and finished third in the re-started race. it wasn't a representative showing for the M28. Firstly Watson felt that it didn't feel well balanced during practice -and he was unable to match his December testing times- and secondly his involvment in the first corner pile up resulted in the M28 sustaining a bent suspension link which affected his performance in the race.

John's involvment in the Buenos Aires accident raised the question of just who was responsible. Scheckter felt that Watson had moved over on him but all John reccalls was feeling a tap at the rear of his McLaren which threw him badly off line and started the chain creation. His team mate Tambay was also involved in the accident and, when the two M28S were returned to the paddock, Gordon Coppuck found that there was *"at least two hours work"* required to make them both race ready. There was only one course of action open to them and that was to hurry Watson's car back to the starting grid using parts taken off Tambay's machine, reducing Patrick to the role of spectator. Watson is another who should have a better change of success at Interlagos, a bumpy circuit where he was a scant one tenth of a second slower than World Champion Andretti during Goodyear tyre tests.

Lastly, one considers the plight of Morris Nunn and the Ensign team. They went out to Buenos Aires with the elderly MN06 design that had enjoyed such great promise in the hands of Chris Amon back in 1976. As recently as the 1978 Canadian Grand Prix this car was in the points when derek daly finished sixth,splitting the Tyrrells of Depailler and Pironi. Daly has signed up to drive again for Nunn in 1979, and was at the wheel in Argentina, but lack of a sponsor has meant that the team's new ground effect car will not be ready until the South African Grand Prix. Weeks have passed with Nunn explaining *"it's nearly finished"*, but shortage of a sponsor has made for slow progress over the winter. Mo is now in partnership with Chuck Jones and Hong Kong businessman Teddy Yip, Yip's recent deal with the team assuring them of the money to complete their new machine.

In Buenos Aires Daly qualified last, about six seconds slower than the pole position Ligier of Jacques Laffite. He did not complain unduly, just tried his very best and displayed a pair of badly blistered hands as a reward for his efforts. To watch one of the latest ground effect cars sweep up behind the Ensign or Williams on a fast corner was quite a remarkable sight. Daly explained *"the Ligiers were making about 300 yards on me just through the long corner at the bottom of the circuit. On one occasion i saw a blue speck as i went into the corner and Depailler was coming past me as i came out. But they're not any quicker on the straight. Once he pulled two-thirds of the way past he didn't make any more ground on me and i could see him looking across to see if he was clear. Of course there was no point racing him, I eased slightly and let him through and after the next couple of corners he was gone"*

In the race itself Daly raced in determined fashion at the back of the field, holding off Jan Lammers's Shadow for as long as he could and eventually brought the Ensign home in last place, two laps behind Laffite. This season, with a works March-BMW contract under his belt for Formula Two, and a brand new ground effect Ensign on the way, we can expect a lot more progress from this young irishman.

Paul Wilson

Good Year: a compromise

The 1978 arrival of Michelin on the Grand Prix scene had changed the odds in Formula 1 to a considerable extent, not to mention the fact it had upset the balance. This year the duel at the top is going to continue between the two giants. The French company has gained experience. Its American rival must keep on fighting back while still equipping the majority of the field, which obviously causes production problems. Goodyear is seeking the ideal compromise for the distribution of "good tyres". But by definition, a compromise is never ideal...

Althoug last year Goodyear won the World Championship for Drivers with the aid of Lotus, it had a difficult season in more aspects than one. First of all from a technical point of view as the crushing superiority of Michelin tyres during the Brazilian Grand Prix at the beginning of the season left the Americans initially stunned and then vorried. Goodyear hat to react... and quickly. Then from a political aspect Goodyear's attitude has never received everybody's vote. A policy both too strict and too elitist has prevented certain teams and in particular Ligier, Williams and Arrows from playing their hoped-for role. Besides this, the "small teams", without any pull were irrevocably condemned to playing minor roles. Because of all this there was much criticism.

Thus, in spite of its World Championship victory, Goodyear thought it would be a good idea to change its tactics in '79. This meant continuing progress while satisfying the maximum number of teams.

Things have not been easy. *"Our problem is that we have to be very competitive in the face of Michelin while allowing the greatest possible number of cars to be competitive too"*, explained Paul Lauritzen, head of the Goodyear F1 programme. *"We have looked for the fairest compromise"*.

Lauritzen and his men took a long time to find it, if indeed they have. Since last autumn four different policies of distribution have been put forward one after another, the last of which dates exactly from the Argentinian Grand Prix. On Thursday afternoon a communique explained the final policy chosen by Goodyear. It was, it appears, applied in Buenos Aires and will be again—in theory—at least until the opening of the European season.

Here are its terms.

—First pratice session; no qualification tyres for anybody. Only racing tyres are given to the teams who can thus devote themselves to setting up the cars.

—Second session; the nine contracted teams receive qualification tyres distributed as follows: four sets for Lotus, Ligier, and Brabham; three sets for Tyrrell, Williams and McLaren; two sets for Arrows, Wolf and Copersucar (it being understood that the last two enter only one car).

—Final session; the five fastest from Friday (a restriction) receive two extra sets each, as well as the the quickest single car from the five non-contracted teams (ATS, Shadow, Merzario, Team Rebaque and Ensign)—this is free. (These teams usually have to pay for their tyres.)

"The main reason why we have adopted this compromise is to reduce the number of qualification tyres to be produced. Last year they made a big hole in our global budget. Secondly, it is difficult to reconcile large scale production and continual research, it takes up too much of our resources. Thirdly, a team having setting-up problems during the first session still has a chance nonetheless of doing well in the following ones. And finally, with this compromise it really is the quickest without preference who have qualifying tyres at the end of practice. I think that goes in the direction of sporting equality."

Paul Lauritzen used the phrase *"reconcile large scale production and continual research"*. There is Goodyear's real problem at the moment when tyres represent an area of constant development because of Michelin's arrival. *"This new competition has doubled the price of our Formula 1 stake"* Lauritzen admits, and also recognises the fact that in spite of Michelin's immediate success or thanks to it, this competition has had beneficial results for Goodyear. *"Of course"*, said the American *"competition is great when you're winning, but not so good when you're losing. That being said our engineers are under pressure and learn very quickly. Technologically speaking it's interesting for us too. We have to enlarge our field of knowledge. We always push our researches even further ahead"*.

– Don't you think that this in itself could be both dangerous and unhealthy for Formula 1? It isn't quite normal that everything should be limited by the regulations except tyres.

"No, on the contrary, it's a very good thing and I'm completely in the affirmative on this point. If possible areas of progress are restricted, then everything is restricted, and aerodynamic research in particular. If tyre limits are reached too quickly, then there's no use in doing any further research. It's a denial of progress. In relation to evolution at the moment we want to have bigger tyres for the future. It's possible in fact that evolution is going ahead too quickly. This is not only because of tyres, but because of ground effect cars as well".

– It's a dangerous thing for Formula 1.

"But racing is dangerous in itself. There again you have a history of compromise. You have to know what you want. Do you want to limit danger in the race? Then the development of tyres must continue and also one must be able to have bigger ones, as in this way the overall safety of the cars will progress. With narrow tyres cars would be much more dangerous as their road-holding would be worse. Races would be perhaps more selective where drivers are concerned, but a whole lot more dangerous".

– Has tyre development in fact any limits?

"With the appearance of ground effect cars, it has only just begun. The system has just been discovered. How far will it go? I don't know. All I know is that the cars are going to progress, and the tyres too".

So the tyres progress, as much for qualification (search for the best adherence possible for a very short period, even if these tyres are completely cooked after a few minutes) as for racing tyres (compromise—yet another—between speed and endurance).

In this respect progress is already noticeable at the end of a winter during which a lot of work and study want on, which resulted in a new generation of racing tyres appearing in Buenos Aires.

"Their characteristics are the following" said Lauritzen. *"Rear tyres with a bigger diameter and wider front tyres, and also different types of rubber"*. The choice of these tyres was fixed after intensive practice sessions (a thousand tyres were tested) mainly carried out in collaboration with Lotus, McLaren and Copersucar on the Interlagos and Buenos Aires circuits. *"These teams have said that they were very satisfied with these new tyres"*, Lauritzen affirmed. *"It's undoubtedly the best racing tyre that we have ever produced"*.

And Paul had his judgement backed up by the fact that during the Friday morning session (without qualifying tyres) and the Friday afternoon (with qualifying tyres), there was not a great deal of difference. Indeed the fastest times had even been set with racing tyres, which, it must be said in passing, astonished certain competitors who wondered if these racing tyres did not have a little touch of "qualifiers" about them.

In Buenos Aires although they gave every appearance of being efficient certain reserves could be put forward concerning these "famous" tyres. Firstly if the two sessions quoted by Lauritzen are used as reference points, the temperature was much higher in the second than in the first which falsifies the comparison to a considerable extent. Besides this, certain drivers, among whom was Derek Daly, complained that these new tyres were adapted above all to wing cars, and interfered with the setting up of conventional cars. To this Lauritzen retorted *"Emerson Fittipaldi was delighted with these tyres during practice in December. If our tyres are better adapted to wing cars, it wasn't intentional"*. In truth, Goodyear must have assimilated and understood certain things through its contact with Lotus, and they have had effects at all levels.

Goodyear has entered into a difficult battle with Michelin—the opposite is also true. According to Lauritzen, Michelin's advantage is *"They're in an ideal position, they equip four cars, whereas we have to satisfy twenty-two, or six times more"*. Goodyear's advantage, still Lauritzen speaking, *"we have a great deal more experience"*.

Pierre Dupasquier, his opposite number in Michelin would obviously agree, but not with what followed. *"We'll beat them"* said Lauritzen with a smile. *"I can't say what will happen in '79, '80 or '81. But Goodyear has so much technical potential that we won't fail to beat them. It's a question of time. We have a lot of practice and research to do, and given a little time we will finally be better than Michelin. We'll beat them as we beat Firestone. We'll be the best. The unfortunate thing is that Dupasquier must be thinking exactly the same"*. All the same, the two men are the best of friends.

It is highly likely that Goodyear will do a lot of research, but it appears certain, and this would be a big surprise, that the Americans will not tackle the French on their own ground, namely, they do not believe in the radial tyre... at least, not yet. *"We tried some in Brazil this winter"*, said Lauritzen. *"They were quick and efficient, but neither as quick nor as efficient as the racing tyres we have here"*. Paul Lauritzen enigmatically refused to say anything more. A sort of compromise between information and silence!

What a contrast between his image and that of his country. The Argentinians sing, dance and shout, screaming their enthusiasm for their "Lole". He remains imperturbable. Ice cold. Stoney faced. Tremendous, held-back energy. It is only at the start that "Lole" really breaks loose. Carlos is not an Argentinian, he is a professional

"LOLÉ"

You have just left Ferrari for Lotus. for what reasons? Did Jody Scheckter's joining the team make you want to leave?
No, no. Nothing to do with Scheckter's arrival. I think that Jody is a driver like the others, and I wasn't going to take offence at his joining. It's simple enough, one day I wanted to leave, to change teams. I needed to, so I did.

Although the season has only just begun, can you already say that it's a good change?
I'm not in a position to know yet, I'll have to wait. I've had only a few practice sessions in the Lotus team. I'll need some time to see how they're organised, how they work. At the present moment, it's far too early to make a judgement.

Leaving Ferari for Lotus, you're also leaving Michelin for Goodyear. You don't believe in radial tyres?
I think that Michelin got through an incredible amount of work last year. I won four races with these tyres. For a first season it was excellent, and they gained a whole lot of experience. This year, even with Goodyear, I'm going to have a great deal of trouble winning another four Grand Prix. That said, I don't really know what to think about the radial tyre technology itself. You can't make only one judgement. I thing this technique represents a good compromise. On some circuits these tyres are very efficient, on others they're not. Why, I don't know.

After having driven the Ferrari T3, what do you think of the Lotus 79? Have you had any problems adapting?
In fact I found myself in contact with a new technology as it was the first time I had driven a ground effect car. I must admit that at the beginning I was rather surprised. The tyres and the chassis reacted very differently. But I got used to it pretty quickly and now I fell I've been driving the 79 for a long time. I don't feel in a strange element any longer.

Have you got good memories of your last two seasons with Ferrari?
I worked very hard with Ferrari. It's a very powerful and professional team, which includes excellent technicians and mechanics who work in an excellent framework. In two years I learned a lot and acquired much experience. It was a good period. I've got nothing to complain about. I had a couple of pleasant seasons.

But is was said that during the first year Niki Lauda "psyched" you out, and that blocked you a little.
No. The only thing was that Niki knew exactly how the team worked, and how it reacted in the face of an eventuality. It was his fourth year with the team whereas I had just arrived.

Did you appreciate working with Mauro Forghieri?
Yes, I think Forghieri is an excellent technician on the circuits. He has had a lot of experience, but he has his negative sides. He is very higly strung and makes too much of a fuss in front of the press. He makes everyone nervous

Although you're Argentinian, you haven't got a Latin temperament, you are not very exuberant. Are you going to feel more at home with Lotus than with Ferrari?

I know I'm going to feel more at home because I've lived alongside the English for a long time. I know how they react, I'm used to their behaviour. I like their way of life. They are generally very calm and un-emotional.

But to make an accurate comment on the Lotus team itself, I shall have to wait until after a few races.

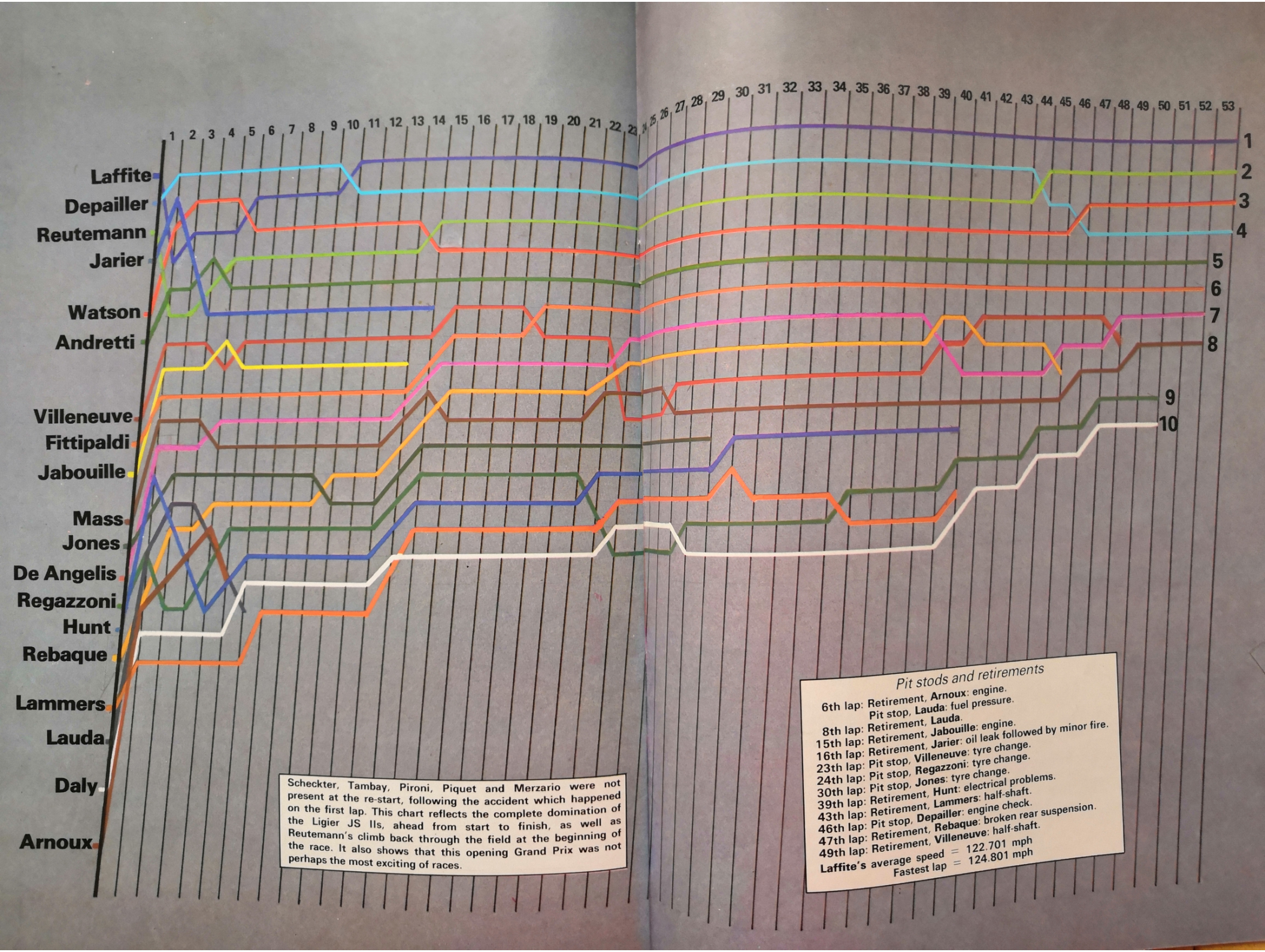
Have you the same contract as Ronnie Peterson had last year? Is there an official hierarchy between Mario Andretti and yourself?
No. I don't know what contract Peterson had last year. I don't yet know who will be the first or second driver. Nothing is signed in this respect.

You have been in Formula 1 for seven years now. Do you think that joining Lotus is your chance of winning the Worl Championship, or does it represent a new start?
In Formula 1 everybody works to win the Championship and drives with that in mind. Some win. Others such as Peterson or Moss never do, although they have all the talent necessary to do so. Winning the World Championship depends on a combination of so many elements. When everything is together then you win the Championship. But it's not easy to get all those elements together. It depends on tyres, on engines, on preparation, evolution of equipment, on good organisation during practice. Mistakes should never be made. It's a very complex situation. Thus I don't know if this year will be my last chance, or if I will have others in the future. I'm trying to evolve in the best conditions and I'll do everything possible to make it work. A driver can't do everything. He's deeply linked to his team.

It is said that you race according to mood, that you don't always have the same motivation and that your driving shows it. Do you agree?
It's true that people often say that. Perhaps there's a grain of truth in it, I don't know. Let them think what they want. What I can say is that I always try and drive in the same fashsion.

Do you feel you're a technician? Do you like setting up a car?
Today in Formula 1, it's necessary to be very conscientious about one's work to get the best out of a car. Racing is my job. Setting up a car is part of it. It's a whole.

Does taking part in your national Grand Prix make you feel any special emotions?
Not really, it's not a very strong emotion. The same as anywhere else. For Buenos Aires is like all other circuits throughout the world. It's not because I'm on my home track I'm going to go any quicker or better than usual. Sure, I'd love to win, the Argentinians would go crazy with joy. But does one ever know what's going to happen? I'm preparing for this race as I would for any other, and I'd like to win them all!



Scheckter, Tambay, Pironi, Piquet and Merzario were not present at the re-start, following the accident which happened on the first lap. This chart reflects the complete domination of the Ligier JS IIs, ahead from start to finish, as well as Reutemann's climb back through the field at the beginning of the race. It also shows that this opening Grand Prix was not perhaps the most exciting of races.

Pit stods and retirements

6th lap: Retirement, **Arnoux**: engine.
Pit stop, **Lauda**: fuel pressure.
8th lap: Retirement, **Lauda**.
15th lap: Retirement, **Jabouille**: engine.
16th lap: Retirement, **Jarier**: oil leak followed by minor fire.
23th lap: Pit stop, **Villeneuve**: tyre change.
24th lap: Pit stop, **Regazzoni**: tyre change.
30th lap: Pit stop, **Jones**: tyre change.
39th lap: Retirement, **Hunt**: electrical problems.
43th lap: Retirement, **Lammers**: half-shaft.
46th lap: Pit stop, **Depailler**: engine check.
47th lap: Retirement, **Rebaque**: broken rear suspension.
49th lap: Retirement, **Villeneuve**: half-shaft.

Laffite's average speed = 122.701 mph
Fastest lap = 124.801 mph

Starting grid

Laffite	Ligier JS 11	*1'44''20*
Depailler	Ligier JS 11	*1'45''24*
Reutemann	Lotus 79	*1'45''34*
Jarier	Tyrrell 009	*1'45''36*
Scheckter	Ferrari T3	*1'45''58*
Watson	Mac Laren M28	*1'45''76*
Andretti	Lotus 79	*1'45''96*
Pironi	Tyrrell 009	*1'46''43*
Tambay	Mac Laren M28	*1'46''56*
Villeneuve	Ferrari T3	*1'46''88*
Fittipaldi	Copersucar F5	*1'47''15*
Jabouille	Renault	*1'47''46*
Patrese	Arrow A1B	*1'48''33*
Mass	Arrow A1B	*1'48''34*
Jones	Williams FW06	*1'48''44*
De Angelis	Shadow DN9B	*1'48''51*
Regazzoni	Williams FW 06	*1'48''64*
Hunt	Wolf WR 7	*1'48''77*
Rebaque	Lotus 79	*1'49''36*
Piquet	Brabham BT 46	*1'49''49*
Lammers	Shadow DN 9B	*1'49''51*
Mezzario	Mezzario A 1B	*1'50''26*
Lauda	Brabham BT 48	*1'50''29*
Daly	Ensign MN 177	*1'51''05*

Did not qualify

Stuck	ATS	*1'51''28*
Arnoux	Renault	*1'51''52*

Untimed practice sessions

Saturday morning		*Sunday morning*	
Reutemann	1'44''65	Laffite	1'46''19
Laffite	1'46''52	Depailler	1'46''95
Tambay	1'46''82	Villeneuve	1'47''18
Andretti	1'46''92	Scheckter	1'47''26
Depailler	1'46''96	Jarier	1'47''34
Scheckter	1'47''11	Pironi	1'47''76
Pironi	1'47''40	Watson	1'47''77
Jarier	1'47''48	Reutemann	1'47''97
Jabouille	1'47''55	Andretti	1'48''11
Jones	1'47''90	Jabouille	1'48''56
Regazzoni	1'48''22	Fittipaldi	1'49''06
Patrese	1'48''26	Patrese	1'49''46
Rebaque	1'48''45	Jones	1'50''35
Villeneuve	1'48''94	Rebaque	1'50''37
Fittipaldi	1'49''05	Regazzoni	1'50''49
Hunt	1'49''15	Mass	1'50''82
Mass	1'49''65	Lauda	1'50''97
Lammers	1'49''79	De Angelis	1'51''18
Merzario	1'50''86	Piquet	1'51''63
Arnoux	1'51''15	Hunt	1'51''84
Daly	1'51''36	Daly	1'51''95
Stuck	1'51''39	Lammers	1'52''05
Lauda	2'04''52	Merzario	1'53''77
etc.		*etc.*	

Practice times

	1st session	*2nd session*	*3rd session*
26 Laffitte	1 45 78	1 45 50	**1 44 20**
25 Depailler	**1 45 24**	1 46 20	1 45 79
2 Reutemann	1 45 68	1 46 07	**1 45 34**
4 Jarier	1 45 40	**1 45 36**	1 49 54
11 Scheckter	**1 45 58**	1 48 05	1 46 39
7 Watson	1 46 49	1 46 73	**1 45 76**
1 Andretti	1 46 80	1 46 47	**1 45 96**
3 Pironi	1 46 56	—	**1 46 43**
8 Tambay	1 47 54	1 47 79	**1 46 56**
12 Villeneuve	1 47 32	1 47 27	**1 46 88**
14 Fittipaldi	**1 47 15**	1 47 93	1 48 93
15 Jabouille	1 48 77	1 49 58	**1 47 46**
29 Patrese	1 49 50	1 48 65	**1 48 33**
30 Mass	**1 48 34**	1 48 70	1 49 14
27 Jones	1 49 03	1 49 08	**1 48 44**
18 De Angelis	**1 48 51**	1 49 31	1 48 62
28 Regazzoni	**1 48 64**	1 48 93	1 49 08
20 Hunt	1 50 48	1 49 61	**1 48 77**
31 Rebaque	**1 49 36**	1 50 00	1 49 58
6 Nelson Piquet	1 50 59	**1 49 49**	—
17 Lammers	**1 49 51**	**1 50 30**	1 49 55
24 Merzario	1 53 54	1 54 35	**1 50 26**
5 Lauda	2 03 07	1 56 43	**1 50 29**
22 Daly	**1 51 05**	1 52 76	1 52 12
9 Stuck	**1 51 28**	1 52 67	—
16 Arnoux	1 53 55	**1 51 52**	1 59 34

World Championship for Drivers: positions

1. Laffite	**9 points**
2. Reuteman	**6 points**
3. Watson	**4 points**
4. Depailler	**3 points**
5. Andretti	**2 points**
6. Fittipaldi	**1 point**

World Championship for Constructors: positions

1. Ligier	**9 points**
2. Lotus	**6 points**
3. McLaren	**4 points**
4. Copersucar	**1 point**

Buenos Aires Circuit ; Records

Average speed
Laffite (Ligier JS 11) 53 laps in 1 h. 36'03'' average speed 122,69 MPH.
The old record was held by Andretti in 1978: 1 h. 37'04'' average speed 119,12 MPH.

Lap record during the race
Jacques Laffite (Ligier JS 11) 1 h. 46'91'' on 42nd lap. 124,8 MPH.
Previous record: James Hunt (Mc Laren M 26) 1 h. 50'58'' in 1978. 120,731 MPH.

Fastest lap in practice.
Jacques Laffite (Ligier JS 11): 1 h. 44'20''.
Previous record: Mario Andretti (Lotus 78): 1 h. 47'75''.

Positions during the Race.

15th Lap:

1.	Laffite	27'16''50
2.	Depailler	7'' behind
3.	Watson	13'' behind
4.	Reutemann	13'' behind
5.	Andretti	30'' behind
6.	Jarier	32'' behind
7.	Villeneuve	38'' behind
8.	Fittipaldi	46'' behind
9.	De Angelis	50'' behind
10.	Mass	57'' behind
11.	Rebaque	57'' behind
12.	Jones	1'1'' behind
13.	Regazzoni	1'14'' behind
14.	Hunt	1'25'' behind
15.	Daly	1'34'' behind
16.	Lammers	1'35'' behind
17.	Jabouille	1'44'' behind

30th Lap

1.	Laffite	54'24''17
2.	Depailler	11'' behind
3.	Reutemann	14'' behind
4.	Watson	37'' behind
5.	Andretti	1'00'' behind
6.	Fittipaldi	1'19'' behind
7.	De Angelis	1'30'' behind
8.	Rebaque	1'35'' behind
9.	Villeneuve	1'47'' behind
10.	Mass	1 lap behind
11.	Jones	1 lap behind
12.	Hunt	1 lap behind
13.	Lammers	1 lap behind
14.	Daly	1 lap behind
15.	Regazzoni	1 lap behind

45th Lap:

1.	Laffite	1 h 21'26''91
2.	Reutemann	18'' behind
3.	Depailler	20'' behind
4.	Watson	1'11'' behind
5.	Andretti	1'42'' behind
6.	Fittipaldi	1 lap behind
7.	Villeneuve	1 lap behind
8.	Rebaque	1 lap behind
9.	De Angelis	1 lap behind
10.	Mass	2 laps behind
11.	Jones	3 laps behind
12.	Regazzoni	3 laps behind
13.	Daly	3 laps behind
14.	Lammers	4 laps behind
15.	Hunt	6 laps behind

Fastest Laps

1.	Laffite	1'46''91
2.	Reutemann	1'47''44
3.	Depailler	1'47''90
4.	Villeneuve	1'48''54
5.	Jarier	1'49''73
6.	Andretti	1'49''74
7.	Rebaque	1'49''86
8.	Fittipaldi	1'50''29
9.	De Angelis	1'50''35
10.	Jones	1'50''61
11.	Mass	1'50''62
12.	Jabouille	1'50''79
13.	Regazzoni	1'51''13
14.	Hunt	1'51''21
15.	Lammers	1'52''13
16.	Arnoux	1'52''30
17.	Lauda	1'52''65
18.	Daly	1'53''23

Results

1.	**Laffite**	**Ligier JS 11 53 laps in 197.587 km/h**	**1 h 36'03''21**
2.	**Reutemann**	**Lotus 79**	**14''94 behind**
3.	**Watson**	**McLaren M 28**	**1'28''79 behind**
4.	**Depailler**	**Ligier JS 11**	**1'41''72 behind**
5.	**Andretti**	**Lotus 79**	**1 lap behind**
6.	**Fittipaldi**	**Copersucar F. 5**	**1 lap behind**
7.	**De Angelis**	**Shadow DN 9B**	**1 lap behind**
8.	**Mass**	**Arrows A 1B**	**2 laps behind**
9.	**Jones**	**Williams FW 06**	**2 laps behind**
10.	**Regazzoni**	**Williams FW 06**	**2 laps behind**
11.	**Daly**	**Ensign MN '77**	**2 laps behind**
12.	**Villeneuve**	**Ferrari T3**	**5 laps behind**
13.	**Rebaque**	**Lotus 79**	**6 laps behind**
14.	**Lammers**	**Shadow DN9B**	**11 laps behind**
15.	**Hunt**	**Wolf WR7**	**12 laps behind**

Argentinian Grand Prix

1st Event counting for the 1979 World Championship for Drivers.
53 laps of the Buenos Aires Circuit (1 lap = 3,708 Miles).
Race distance = 196,52 Miles.

Results

(Last five years)

1978 Andretti: Lotus Mk 4 78
1977 Scheckter: Wolf Ford W.R. 1
1975 Fittipaldi: McLaren M. 23
1974 Hulme: Mc Laren M. 23
1973 Fittipaldi: Lotus 72

Grand Prix International
Nº 2
on sale
14 february

From the cockpits

LIGIER GITANES

LIGIER FORD JS II/03
Patrick DEPAILLER (F)
LIGIER FORD JS II/02
Jacques LAFFITE (F)
LIGIER FORD JS II/01
Reserve

Jacques Laffite, the original team member, and Patrick Depailler his new team-mate each had an entirely new JS II. Things went well when they practised for the first time, as they set the fastest times during Thursday's untimed practice session with Depailler ahead of Laffite. Patrick set the fastest time in the first timed practice session, but ran into problems with skirt fixing during the afternoon. Laffite had met with the same problem in the previous session, and as well as this the gearbox on the reserve car had been broken. He took longer than Patrick to balance his car correctly and finally made the fastest time. During the race the JS II's were untouchable. Although Depailler's car was suffering from severe oversteer. A vapor-lock problem (or an electrical one, he didn't know which) dropped him from second to fourth place after a pit stop.

MARTINI LOTUS

JPS 22 (Lotus 79/4) Ford
Mario ANDRETTI (U.S.A.)
JPS 20 (Lotus 79/2) Ford
Carlos REUTEMANN (Arg.)
JPS 21 (Lotus 79/3) Ford
Reserve

A slightly barren weekend for the Lotus 79s which did not show their usual superiority. Carlos Reutemann and especially Mario Andretti had a great deal of difficulty in adapting their cars to the new greater diameter Goodyear racing tyres during practice. Even before the race itself Mario was disillusioned *"I'm just gonna try and finish"* he said before the start. Carlos Reutemann was Ligier's most dangerous rival, but when he was beginning to cause Depailler serious problems for second place, an exhaust broke. As his engine started to lose power, the Argentinian allowed Patrick to get away from him... only to collect second place when the Frenchman stopped. Had the race lasted another lap Reutemann might not have perhaps finished as at the end of the race he was a victim of fuel feed problems.

Mario himself had a solitary race in fifth position. Involved in the accident after the first start, he was obliged to use the reserve car, and immediately realized that there was too much downforce at the front. His car had a pronounced understeer. Besides this the badly fixed bodywork caused the car to lose a lot of its efficiency during the final third of the race.

MARLBORO TEAM McLAREN

McLAREN FORD M 28/2
John WATSON (G.-B.)
McLAREN FORD M 28/1
Patrick TAMBAY (F)

The new McLaren M 28s tackled the Argentinian Grand Prix with high hopes. In December during the preliminary practice sessions Watson had been the fastest in 1.45"2 with Goodyear's new racing tyres, which moreover had decided the choice of the American manufacturer. Since their appearance the M 28s had been modified following intensive practice session in the hands of John Watson in particular. The anti-roll bars had been moved and the underside of the car modified with in particular,a new skirts system. After the first session John and Patrick both realized that these modifications had perhaps been too radical. Aimed at improving the stability of the car in fast bends they achieved this, but in slow corners the M 28s lacked far too much grip. The McLaren drivers went progressively backwards to the old settings, and in the end found a compromise which enabled them to qualify well up the field, although Tambay's car showed signs of catching fire at the end of the last practice session.

Both McLarens were involved in the accident after the start. Only Watson's could start again albeit with damaged suspension. John drove a worthy race finishing third, well in front of Andretti, but he was never in a position to do anything about Reutemann's Lotus and the Ligiers.

FITTIPALDI AUTO MOTIVE

COPERSUCAR FORD F 05 A/1
EMERSON FITTIPALDI (Br)
COPERSUCAR FORD F 05 A/2
Reserve

Although he appeared quite at home during the first timed practice session, after that Fittipaldi, on a track that was getting warmer did not manage to find the right balance. Resigned to playing a waiting game, he was first of all running behind Jabouille and then alone when the Renault retired. At the end of the race he was threatened by Villeneuve whose Ferrari also retired, and the Brazilian ended up in a slightly flattering sixth place.

SHADOW RACING

SHADOW FORD DN 9/2 B
Jan LAMMERS (Hol.)
SHADOW FORD DN 9/1 B
Elio de Angelis (I.)

Two debutants at the beginning of a season which looks like being a difficult one for Don Nicolls. Alongside Lammers, Elio de Angelis was a last minute replacement for Danny Ongais who had injured his arm. De Angelis made a considerable impression in both practice and the race, chasing Jabouille at the beginning and then Fittipaldi. He had however to slow down and finished seventh almost running out of petrol. Jan Lammers was less at home, admitting himself that he had not yet managed to tame his F1 car. A broken drive-shaft caused his retirement after he had raced together with Derek Daly for a long time.

WARSTEINER ARROWS RACING TEAM

ARROWS FORD A1 Mk 2/3
Riccardo PATRESE (I.)
ARROWS FORD A1 Mk 2/2
Jochen MASS (Ger.)

A difficult start for the Arrows which had however, undergone considerable modifications during the winter. They were in fact different cars; rear suspension completely modified, side pods redesigned and lengthened, new skirts, and bigger rear brakes. Mass was more at home than his team-mate who had to use qualifying tyres in the third timed session to do better than the German. Riccardo did not start. During the warm-up as he was following Piquet's Brabham very closely, his brake pedal went to the floor and the Arrows hit the Brabham.

SAUDIA WILLIAMS

SAUDIA WILLIAMS FW 06/05
Alan JONES (Aus.)
SAUDIA WILLIAMS FW 06/03
Clay REGAZZONI (Sw.)

A disappointing and uneventful weekend for Alan Jones and Clay Regazzoni who did what they could with outdated equipment. *"It was a World Champion's car, two years ago,"* said Clay, *"but things evolve so quickly."* They had one quality at least, reliability. They finished ninth and tenth each having to change tyres.

TEAM ENSIGN

MN 177 MN 0/6
Derek DALY (Irl.)

Derek Daly was faced with the same problem as Jones and Regazzoni, namely that of driving a car of outdated design. He ran at the back during the race after having been the last man to qualify. *"I had stability problems all through practice,"* stated the Irishman. *"I feel that the new Goodyear tyres are much more adapted to ground effect cars than conventional ones. It is very easy to destroy the car's balance with a set of new tyres."*

FERRARI SEFAC

FERRARI 312 T 3/035
Jody SCHECKTER (SA)
FERRARI 312 T 3/036
Gilles VILLENEUVE (C)
FERRARI 312 T 3/033
Reserve

When the Ferraris are not really competitive then nothing works in the team which jumps from one problem to another. Three T3s were sent to Argentina. One of them, the reserve car, was fitted with skirts on the bottom of the tub. The two others were fitted with some of the aerodynamic modifications which will grace the T4. Things started off well for the red cars as Scheckter was third fastest during the first session. Afterwards he did not manage to improve on this complaining that the track was too slippery, that there was too much traffic, and in the last session his engine went.

Gilles Villeneuve was no luckier. At the moment when the track suited the Ferraris best, on the Friday morning when everybody set his time, Gilles was stopped in the pits with fuel injection problems. The Ferraris were visibly ill at ease during practice. On Sunday morning however, the Scuderia had gained courage; with full tanks and on racing tyres Gilles and Jody were the quickest after the Ligiers. For them however, the race was a disaster. Scheckter caused the pile-up after the start when he lost a wheel. A painful knuckle caused him to miss the restart in the reserve car.

TEAM TYRRELL

TYRRELL FORD 009/2
Didier PIRONI (F)
TYRRELL FORD 009/1
Jean-Pierre JARIER (F)
TYRRELL FORD 008/5
Reserve

After a very good start everything finished very badly for the unfortunate Tyrrell team. From the first practice session onwards Jean-Pierre Jarrier seemed to be the only one capable of challenging the Ligiers. Unfortunately during the Saturday session the rear wing support broke off, and Jean-Pierre who no longer had any rear wheel adherence left the track. The tub was repaired for the race but the Tyrrell had lost its efficiency. After a very good start Jean-Pierre was obliged to let Watson, Laffite, and Reutemann past before retiring with a broken engine.

Pironi's weekend was even more difficult. Whereas like Jarier, he dreamed

of being among the leaders one of his tyres exploded right in the middle of the first session. Didier was looking forward to a place in the front line, no more no less. In the race he bent his monocoque in the crash after the start.

REBAQUE F 1 TEAM

JPS 19 (LOTUS 79) FORD
Hector REBAQUE

JPS 18(LOTUS 79) FORD
Reserve

Young Rebaque met with no particular problems during practice. He drove a good race passing Jones and Mass, but had to retire just before the end with broken suspension.

WOLF RACING

OLYMPUS CAMERAS
WOLF FORD WR 7
James HUNT (G.B.)

OLYMPUS CAMERAS
WOLF FORD WR 6
Reserve

James Hunt did not cover many laps during this Argentinian weekend. He kept his hand in with his completely new Wolf which had only covered a few laps at reduced speed at Donington as testing. His practice sessions were of the briefest. Besides the numerous detail problems which often affect new cars, the Canadian team discovered an aerodynamic deficiency.

RENAULT ELF

RENAULT RS 04
Jean-Pierre JABOUILLE (F)

RENAULT RS 03
René ARNOUX (F)

RENAULT R5 02
Reserve

While their friends sported themselves happily in the upper half of the time sheets, René Arnoux and Jean-Pierre Jabouille spent most of their time hanging round the pits.
Last winter their cars followed a weight reducing course. A new exchanger, a starter, an alternator and a new battery all of which were much smaller resulted in the loss of a good dozen kilos
Arnoux used up two engines and did not qualify. He started thanks to the withdrawals of Patrese and Stuck, but retired immediately with a broken engine, and he was also involved in the accident after the start. Jabouille's first practice sessions were marked by vapor lock problems. The mechanics modified the fuel system for the following sessions. With a cooler engine Jean-Pierre improved his time considerably the next day but remained wary about the race, the cooling was not ideal. In spite of an oil radiator being fitted Jean-Pierre retired in the pits with a broken engine during the race.

PARMALAT RACING

BRABHAM ALFA-ROMEO BT 48/1
Niki LAUDA (Aut)

BRABHAM ALFA-ROMEO BT 48/7
Nelson PIQUET (Ar)

Just like his former rival James Hunt with the Wolf,Niki Lauda formed himself up against numerous problems, practising with the two BT 48s, one with a normal wing, and the other with an integral one. The Austrian however, had wanted these cars brought across, to enable him to begin the setting up of this 'original' car. Neither of them provided him with any satisfaction, particularly because of the skirts which never worked properly. Just managing to qualify on the last row, Niki tried to improve at the wheel of the BT 46 but only managed to spread oil all over the track. In despair he decided to start at the wheel of the BT 48 with a normal wing. For the first time he covered more than three laps in succession and got up to the thirteenth place, but retired on lap nine because of fuel pressure problems.
Nelson Piquet will not have good memories of the Argentinian Grand Prix. His Sunday was marred by two accidents. During the warm-up Patrese hit him and knocked him off the track. The mechanics made a good job of repairing the damage but Nelson did not go far. He hit Merzario in the accident after the start, and that was the end of his race.

TEAM MERZARIO

MERZARIO A/2 B
Arturo MERZARIO (I)

Arturo Merzario continues with his courageous adventure of entering a car bearing his own name. Waiting for his new wing car he brought his second model to South America. In spite of electrical problems during practice he managed to qualify, but the first accident robbed him of the pleasure of racing.

ATS/ATS WHEELS

ATS D1/002
Hans STUCK (Ger.)

Personnel changes at ATS with Stuck coming in as driver and Fred Opert as team manager, but with as little success as has been seen in the past. Hans had a new car at his disposal which appeared to the eye of the observer to be handling badly in corners. Stuck left the track on Saturday during untimed practice, because of a broken suspension joint. He withdrew from the race.

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